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HISTORICAL
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FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
LAYING OF CORNER STONE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Atlantic City, N. J.

Historical Discourse

Delivered

SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 28, 1906

By Rev. William Aikman, D. D.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF

LAYING OF CORNER STONE

Atlantic City, N. J.

1906

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A FOREWORD

Seems to me to be necessary. In the providence of God, I had so much to do with shaping this Church to its present form that I shrunk from the work which the Session urged upon me, the results of which are laid before you this morning. I was strongly inclined absolutely to refuse. But it was represented to me that I was in a position to do it as no one else could, and to decline seemed to be to shirk a duty. Then, too, the request came at a time when it was well for me to have thought taken away from myself. So I undertook the labor which soon became a recreation and a relief. I am sure that I will be pardoned if at any point my own personality should seem to appear. It was unavoidable.

W. A.

DISCOURSE

The history of the First Presbyterian Church of Atlantic City is unique and, in a measure, different from that of many others in that, in its earliest stages, it is a history of a building rather than of a church organization. In the case of most churches the religious or spiritual organization is first and after comes the edifice—the family and then the house to make a home for it. But here the house preceded and the family came afterward to fix its dwelling place.

"This church, unlike most in the East of our country, is co-eval with a railroad. I do not recall a similar instance. It is a common as well as an interesting circumstance, in our Western settlements. The iron rail projects itself into the hitherto unoccupied region and straightway a town rises like an exhalation out of the prairie. With the town comes the church. The pioneer comes in with the train and he pitches his tent or puts up his shack before which his wife works and his children play. On Sunday they gather in some improvised room for worship. Soon a church edifice follows as a spiritual shelter; they have now homes both for family and church.

So eminently it is with this church in Atlantic City. A railroad stretches itself along its level way from Camden through scrub oaks and pines till it stops at the sand-dunes that skirt the ocean. It is said by the near-sighted and pessimistic to be a railroad that goes nowhere and ends in nothing, but it projects itself into a marvelous future.

It brings on its first excursion train—pioneer of innumerable greater ones—passengers who celebrate in this way towards the sea the Fourth of July, 1854. With this train comes the pioneer Presbyterian Missionary, in the prime of his early manhood and with the self-denying zeal which shall last him till nearly ninety years have set their crown of glory on his head—the Rev. Allen Henry Brown.* His name will always be connected with the early educational and church work in South Jersey. A work that has thru all these years been full of self-sacrificing and untiring zeal.

Mr. Brown did not select an entirely salubrious season of the year for his first preaching service. It was January 22d, 1855, in the house of Mr. Chalkly Leeds. A violent storm kept him a prisoner for a day or two on the sandy island. Mr. Brown was quick to embrace an opportunity to secure a foothold for a Presbyterian Church, when a Presbyterian Church was only a dream of the future.

He solicited, at once, the gift of a lot for a church building from the Camden and Atlantic Land Company, and on the twenty-second of February—a good omened day—in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-five, received a promise that the company would donate a lot on which a Presbyterian Church might be erected. With a wise forecast, the site on the corner of Pacific and Pennsylvania avenues was selected, and on May 25, 1855, was made sure to the future organization. I have understood that the Land Company seeing the prospective value of the location, proposed soon after to Mr. Brown that he exchange the lot for another in a different part of the city. Mr. Brown, however, signified his entire satisfaction with the lot and its location. So it has remained

*Rev. Allen H. Brown was born of New England ancestry, in New York, September 23, 1820. He spent three years as a student in the New York University, one, the senior, in Columbia College, and was graduated in 1839. He pursued his studies in Princeton Theological Seminary 1840-41 and took the regular three years course and also a fourth, post-graduate year. He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of New York in 1843 and was ordained as an evangelist January 5, 1848. He received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Princeton University, 1904.

as it is, the most desirable site on the island for a church edifice.

The erection of a building was promptly undertaken. As a preliminary step, on September 29, 1855, a Board of Trustees was elected, a meeting being held in Congress Hall, on the corner of Pacific and Massachusetts avenues, then under the proprietorship of Thomas C. Garrett. Three residents of Philadelphia and two residents of Atlantic City were chosen, viz: Samuel Richards, W. Dwight Bell and Paul T. Jones, of Philadelphia, Thomas C. Garrett and William McClees, of Atlantic City.

The building of a church edifice was soon begun and the corner stone was laid on the afternoon of August 21st, 1856, "A shower of rain and the departure of the cars," as the record remarks, "diminishing the audience."

The structure thus begun was that portion which makes the center or main portion of the building as it now appears. The aisles with the clear-story windows, so admirably adapted for both light and ventilation, were added some nineteen years afterward in the Fall of 1875.* This addition was made at a cost of \$3,500, defrayed by Philadelphians who were interested in the church as a Summer ecclesiastical home. The addition gave two hundred more sittings to the audience room.

The erection of the building proceeded with deliberation, and was still far from completion when the first service was held in it, July 25, 1857. It was not dedicated till nearly two years afterward. On June 23, 1859, the service of Dedication was held, Rev. Charles Wadsworth, of Philadelphia, preaching the sermon.

Religious services, with varying regularity, continued to be held while this building was in progress, not in it, but in such hotel parlors and dining rooms as could be secured for that purpose, notably in The Cottage Retreat, Congress Hall, The Ashland House, standing on the site

*It will, perhaps, be interesting to some to know that the late and for many years the Chief of Police of Atlantic City, Harry C. Eldridge, son of Elder Lemuel Eldridge, then a working carpenter, sawed out the openings for the clear-story circular windows through the old timbers, "Spoiling," as he told the writer, "several saws as, in the operation, they struck the well driven nails."

now occupied by the Preston, and oftener in the Mansion House, where now are the First National Bank and The Champion. In this old Mansion House, which remained until a very recent period, many religious assemblages were held. In a report to Synod in the Fall of 1878, twenty-two years after the laying of the corner stone, the Church Extension Committee felicitates itself that a perplexing problem had been solved: "How to keep together and provide for the spiritual wants of our people in Atlantic City, few in number and discouraged, during those greater portions of the year when summer visitors were away. During the cold months the large and beautiful Presbyterian Church, not at all adapted for winter weather, was kept closed." The solution was the renting of the Mansion House. Here a Sunday School was organized in 1877, by Rev. H. M. Kellog, then stately supplying the church.

The affairs of this church enterprise from the first and during all the earlier years of its history were carried on and managed almost exclusively by Christian men residing in Philadelphia. The meetings of the Board of Trustees were held in that city and were attended almost wholly by gentlemen residing there. These meetings for business continued to be held there up to August, 1870.

It will be seen that so far we have been concerned with the history of the church edifice. Indeed this may be considered the only history of it for the first thirty years of its existence. It will also be seen that the organization was kept in existence, with its scanty success, almost wholly by Christian men residing in Philadelphia, who were always ready to answer the appeals of Mr. Brown. The names of such men as W. D. Bell, W. C. Milligan, G. W. Fahnestock, J. E. Brown, in earlier days, and of Rene Gillou, John F. Starr, D. M. Zimmerman, who subsequently took up the work, ought not to go into oblivion. They accomplished results which have endured to this day and which claim the gratitude of these later years. And not less gratefully ought to be recorded the magnanimity and disinterestedness of these Philadelphia gentlemen in quietly and with no remonstrance, but rather

with good wishes, allowing a work to which they had given so much thought and time and money to pass out from their's into other hands.

The first effort toward an independent life seems to have been made about the close of the year 1878, when it was resolved by a meeting of the congregation, held September 2nd, 1878, to elect seven Trustees, four of whom should be residents of Atlantic City. The four elected were Lemuel Eldridge, Charles E. Adams, Hugh Wicks and Amos Bullock.

The meetings of the Board of Trustees continued, for the most part, to be held in the city of Philadelphia; but the records of the Board for some fifteen years show that the members from Atlantic City were seldom or never present. Indeed the existence of the enterprise during these years depended entirely upon the interest and the exertions of these Philadelphians.

It must not be supposed that this was an easy thing to do. The raising of funds to maintain public services, to carry forward the building to completion or rather to keep it in repair—for it would seem that for the most part the decay kept pace with the attempt at finishing it—to have it fit for service when the summer time and bathing season approached, was no simple task. There were times frequently occurring when the hope that there would be an established Presbyterian Church in Atlantic City seemed about to come to an end.

So soon as the beginning of 1858 the church property was in the hands of the sheriff. It was rescued by active financiering from its embarrassments. It must not be understood that at the time now under consideration, the church presented in any way its present appearance. As before stated, the original form of the edifice was merely that of the middle portion of the building, the aisles or the "wings," as they are inaccurately called, not being added until nearly twenty years after the corner stone was laid.

From a paragraph in the minute book of the Board of Trustees, I find that in 1871 the worshipers occupied settees. Under date of September 13th, of that year, "It was ordered that the settees be sold and that pews be

placed in the church, and the inside painted." At the same time it was ordered "that the pulpit be repaired and the same, with the aisles, be carpeted." This was at least partially done, for under date of March 15, 1872, it is recorded that the committee on repairs reported, "The bill for carpenter work and the material, seating and putting new piles under the church, was six hundred and fifty-eight dollars and ninety cents." This account was ordered to be paid, but with the order, it was "Resolved, that Lemuel Eldridge be a committee to make a statement to Allen H. Brown, of the financial conditions of the Society," which seems to your historian to be a sort of help-me-Cassius-or-I-sink cry to their patron saint for deliverance.

It is to be presumed that the appeal was successful, for the report of the Treasurer in the following year shows a balance in the treasury. In the year 1875 an unsuccessful attempt was made to sell the church edifice to the Baptist congregation, "the building, including pews and furniture, for \$5000 cash and the building to be removed by October first." By this it would appear that thirty years ago there was a dissatisfaction with the edifice which has kept itself alive up to this day.

The condition of things, it may be concluded, remained as nearly the same as time and decay would permit as to the building and its surroundings for the next nine years, or when your historian saw it for the first in October, 1882: the paint on the walls, if there was any, the old-fashioned oak graining on the wood work, the worn carpet on pulpit platform, the carpet or cocoa matting on the aisles, the hard, uncushioned seats,—a general air of disconsolateness and forlornness was abroad, as if the church had been maintaining a hard struggle through the years.

The congregation at that time was meeting, as it had always done, in the chapel. There had never been any means provided by which the church could be heated, so when the weather became too cool for the comfort of the congregation, services were removed from the main building to the adjoining chapel.

It is probable that this necessity was the occasion of the erection of the chapel. The proposal to build one was made at a congregational meeting held in September, 1878, and the building, at once commenced, was nearly completed by the middle of November the same year, at a cost of twenty-four hundred dollars. Public service was held in it on Sunday morning, January 20, 1879, when the two children of elder J. F. Wurts were baptised, the first to receive that sacrament in the new building. It was a good consecration where in Sunday School so many children would, in the after time find a place of religious culture.

Up to 1883 the chapel had no special adaptation to the uses of the Sunday School, nor any accommodations for a Primary or a Bible Class. About that time, coincident with the call and soon after the installation of a pastor, in 1884, it became evident that the chapel must be enlarged so as to be adequate for the needs of the congregations which attended services in the winter season, and also to provide a home for the Primary Class, taught in one corner of the room, and under the charge of Mrs. Caroline L. Walker, as well as for a Bible Class that had been organized by the pastor and put under the charge of Allen B. Endicott, a young lawyer, who had recently, with his small family, united himself with the church. These requirements were at once met, and in 1884, about the time of the installation of the pastor, an annex or addition to the chapel was constructed, with sliding windows which could be thrown up, opening into the main room, so as to give accommodation for an audience of about four hundred persons, and also by a system of sliding doors making a room for the Bible Class and the growing Primary Class.

The chapel was originally equipped with pews which with some manipulation were made to answer the requirements of the Sunday School. About the year 1892 these pews were removed and superceded by chairs. At the same time the floor, suddenly grown spacious by the change, was carpeted and made to present the attractive appearance which it has borne since that time.

The state of things which had continued up to the time of the calling and installation of a pastor—a congregation compelled to leave its audience room with the coming of Autumn—could not well continue. And it did not. Beautifying and putting the church in an inviting or rather a condition proper for an audience which overflowed it in the Spring and Summer time, and partially filled it in the Winter season, was in the minds of the people, and especially in the hearts and the thoughts of a very efficient and intelligent Ladies Aid Society, then and for several years afterwards under the leadership of Mrs. Charles E. Adams, and which had of late taken enlarged form and character.

In the winter of 1883-4, Mr. Robert Black, an excellent Presbyterian of Philadelphia, was residing at his home in the upper part of this city, confined to his room by illness which soon proved fatal. It was my privilege frequently to visit him, not so much as the prospective pastor of this church, as a near neighbor, our houses almost adjoining each other. It is with solemn and deep pleasure that I speak to-day of the memory, which lingers after more than a score of years, of the courteous and cheerful greetings, of the calm Christian trust which illuminated his room.

It may be that our intercourse thus casually begun revived and brought into action a purpose which Mr. Black—so I was told by his wife—had had, in his mind and sometimes spoke of, of donating a sum of money that could be used to put this Presbyterian Church in better shape for public and continuous service. However this may be, it was found that Mr. Black had, about this time, added a codicil to his will, made a while before, by which he bequeathed five thousand dollars to this church, three thousand of which were to be used by the Trustees at their discretion on the church building and two thousand to be kept as a memorial fund, the interest of which should be used solely and simply to beautify and keep in order the grounds around it. This gift was manifold the largest which the church has ever received, and it was bestowed at a time in the church's history which gave it a value and

force which no subsequently gifts, however great, will be likely to surpass. These lawns and blooming flowers may well keep in green and fragrant memory that Christian gentleman, Robert Black.

The legacy of Mr. Black was soon available and it gave form to the cherished desire to renovate and beautify the church edifice and its surroundings. Accordingly, in 1887, the church building was raised six and a half feet, heaters were placed in the basement so that the audience room could be occupied at all seasons of the year. At this time the main building was put in entire repair, frescoed, painted within and without, new pews and new pulpit and pulpit furniture placed, the seats were fully cushioned, the floor entirely carpeted, the choir gallery removed from the front of the room, and extensive alterations made in the platform of the pulpit.

About this time (1887) Mrs. George S. Harris, of Philadelphia, placed in the hands of the pastor, Dr. Aikman, a sum of money which she desired him to expend in putting an iron railing around the church lot, replacing the decayed and dilapidated wood that had up to this time, in a way, surrounded it. The consent of the Trustees was readily given and the work was done. At this time the grounds around the church were graded and put in their present shape.

Shortly after this Mrs. Harris expressed to the pastor her desire to remove the unsightly and clumsy wooden weather-vane from the pinnacle of the spire and replace it with a better one. She put in the pastor's hands sufficient funds to defray the expense. The consent of the Trustees enabled the pastor to put in their places the vane and pointers which since that time have ornamented the spire. They, as well as the pulpit Bibles, speak of Mrs. Harris' thoughtful care.

A few years after the weather-vane was in its place, rust or a lightning stroke fixed it immovably and it ceased to be an accurate indicator of the wind's direction. A passer-by, meeting the pastor, chided him for having over his church a vane that was evermore giving a false report. The retort in mitigation was that, "This is a

Presbyterian Church and we are not blown about by every wind of doctrine."

In March, 1889, a pipe organ was erected in the pulpit recess, the entire expense being borne by the Ladies' Aid Society and, by their especial request, under the supervision of the pastor, he selecting the builder, Howard, of Westfield, Massachusetts, the style of the instrument and drawing plans for its emplacement. The Trustees of the Church merely gave their consent that the work should be done. The organ cost a little over two thousand dollars, all of which was paid by the women of the church, no draft at all being made upon its income.

So it was that in these two years (1887-9) marked in its history, this church edifice became a beautiful home for its congregation and could give an appropriate welcome to the thousands that throng it from season to season.

Thus far I have recorded almost exclusively the material history of this church. As I said at the beginning, this was especially necessary. We may now turn to its religious or spiritual history so far as the spiritual and religious can be placed on record.

As already intimated, religious services were begun by the Rev. Allen Brown in the winter of 1854, in the house of Mr. Chalkley Leeds and continued with frequent intervals for the next two years in different private houses.

In the Summer of 1858, four years after these intermittent services, "public worship was held regularly during the bathing season." At the same time a daily morning prayer-meeting was commenced by Mr. Farnestock, of Philadelphia, and was continued during several weeks of that Summer.

The same state of things seems to have continued for the next twelve years. Whether or not public worship was maintained during the seasons when few, if any visitors were in the city, does not appear in any documents which have come into my hands. The scanty annals simply say, "This church had only occasional and stated supplies." Among these were, the Rev. William W. McNair, 1870-1; Rev. A. G. Baker, 1876-77; Rev. Samuel Miller and others; Rev. H. Martin Kellogg, June 7, 1878

to February 29, 1880. During Mr. Kellog's ministry, a Sabbath School was organized in the parlors of the old Mansion House, which in a synodical report of about that time is said to have numbered two hundred scholars.

In the synodical report of 1880 the statement is made, when speaking of the work in Atlantic City, "The church is about to attempt the support of a minister without help from the Board of Home Missions." From this it would appear that up to this time the church had derived a part of its income from that source. Probably the next year, 1881, it ceased to ask such aid.

It does not appear that any serious effort was made toward the organization of a church on this ground till toward the close of the year 1869. About this time a religious canvas of the town was made by the Rev. Robert Aikman, D. D., and the Rev. Allen H. Brown, the Synodical Missionary. Dr. Robert Aikman was pastor of the Third Presbyterian Churches in Elizabeth and in Madison for about forty years, and was for some ten years at the head, as chairman, of the Synod's Committee on Church Extension. Feeling a deep interest in seeking out places where public worship might be sustained and prospective churches might be established, altho a settled and laborious pastor, he did not make his chairmanship of committee a sinecure. So it was that he was accustomed to accompany the Missionary in his explorations, preaching and visiting from house to house with him. While writing these annals a prominent member of this church has told me of the interest with which he heard Dr. Aikman preach, in May's Landing, the sermon still lingering in his boyhood recollection. On one of these missionary tours Dr. Aikman was with Mr. Brown when the attempt was made to gather into a church fold the few and scattered sheep on Absecon Island. In a report as chairman of Committee of Church Extension, made to the Synod in the Fall of 1880, Dr. Aikman remarks, "It is just a few years since when the chairman of your committee and the missionary searched all through the place to find and encourage the half dozen members of its (Atlantic City) almost abandoned Presbyterian Church." He had no

thought that in a couple of years or so his younger brother would have much to do with the church, then in embryo.

On the evening of December 29, 1870, this church was organized by the Presbytery of West Jersey. Rev. Dr. Villerooy D. Read, of the First Presbyterian Church of Camden, preached the sermon on Eph. 5 25-27. Rev. Mr. Brown made a brief historical statement and Dr. Reed constituted the following seven persons as a church, viz:—

Lemuel Eldridge,
Sarah Eldridge,
Henry McNair,
Mary Scull,
Rachel Scull Turner,*
Rebecca R. Townsend,
Jenny S. McNair.

The organization was completed by the election by ballot of Lemuel Eldridge as Ruling Elder. The Rev. Mr. Brown gave the charge to the elder and the Rev. S. W. Pratt the charge to the congregation.

The records of the session, if any were kept, are not to be found and none seem to have been in existence at the close of the year 1876, so that it is not possible to follow the history of the church for the next six years of its organization. There was no addition to the roll of its seven charter members till November 5, 1876, when Mrs. Martha, wife of Richard P. Harris, was received on confession of her faith and the Misses Anna Mary Adams and Caroline Elizabeth Adams on their certificates, as members of the church.

I find in the report of the Church Extension Committee the next year to the Synod (October, 1877) the following sadly significant sentence: "Our church in Atlantic City, until recently, has been dormant if not dead—reduced to seven members and these completely disheartened."

*Mrs. Turner is the only survivor of the charter members of this church. Her son Harry D. Turner is and has been for several years the efficient and accomplished choir master of the church.

The pulpit continued to be supplied by different clergymen, the last of whom as stated supply, was Rev. Edward Bryan, whose term of service ceased, at his own request, October 8, 1882. Mr. Bryan's work was of great benefit to the church and additions enlarged it from forty-five in 1881, to seventy-five in 1882.

Mr. Bryan was especially interested and successful in work in the Sunday School in connection with its efficient Superintendent, Thomas M. Galbreath, of sacred and pleasant memory. Their united, intelligent and earnest work swelled its numbers, widened its influence and made it the most useful and, at the time, the best organized department of the church's work—indeed there was scarcely any other organization.

About the close of Mr. Bryan's term of service, on the invitation of the church, the Rev. William Aikman, D. D.,* preached morning and evening in the chapel, the service being held on Sunday, October 15th, 1882.

In the Spring of the next year, Dr. Aikman, just then recovering from a nearly fatal illness, was invited to take charge of the church for the ensuing four months. He accepted the invitation and began the term of service on Sunday, May 6, 1883. As the warmer months had come, public worship was held in the main audience room. It is significant of the numbers in attendance, that his diary records on the next Sunday, May 13, "A large attendance, chairs in the aisles." Great audiences have always marked the Spring and Summer seasons in this church.

On September 5th, of this year (1883), as his term of temporary service was about to expire, the church extended an unanimous call to Dr. Aikman to become its pastor. While he did not at once see his duty clear to accept the call, he kept steadily on in the work which he had been

*William Aikman was born in New York City, August 12, 1824, of Scotch Huguenot and Dutch ancestry, his forebears on his mother's side coming to New York about 1720, and on his father's side about 1780. He was prepared for college under Rev. J. J. Owen, the N. T. Commentator, was after a four years course graduated with honors by the New York University, 1846. Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, Chancellor. After a three years course graduated by Union Theological Seminary 1849. Licensed to preach by the Fourth Presbytery of New York, 1849, ordained by Presbytery of Newark, December, 1849. Received the Degree of Doctor of Divinity from New York University, 1869.

doing during the Spring and Summer. As the months went on it seemed to him that there was here a great and inviting field, not only to meet the wants of the immense number of people who thronged the church from Sunday to Sunday, but also for the establishment of a self-supporting and independent Presbyterian Church. From the beginning of his ministrations he bent his efforts in this direction. An envelope system was devised for meeting the expenses of the organization as early as September 21, of that year (1883). A while afterward a Young People's Union was formed which with its pleasant gatherings in the pastor's home, proved an efficient help in the growth of the congregation.

The Church had but just entered upon its independent life when it met with a great bereavement in the death of Mr. Lemuel Eldridge, who had been from the first and up to a very recent date its only elder. He was elected Ruling Elder in December, 1870, and he had but two associates up to the close of 1878. I well remember when I first became acquainted with the church, how Mr. Eldridge seemed to embody in himself the whole ecclesiastical organization. As far as could be seen, he was Elder, Trustee and Treasurer all combined. He, with Colonel George W. Hinkle and Charles E. Adams, neither of whom were at that time members of the church, seemed to bear almost the whole affair on their shoulders.

But with the promise of a settled pastor his work, which had been so well done, came to an end. The cordial and affectionate welcome which he gave to the prospective pastor was well nigh a farewell, for he was called to go into the Far Better, when three of the four months service were gone. Mr. Eldridge died August 21st, 1883, and before the call had been extended to Dr. Aikman.

A historical note in the Record book of the Session will be an appropriate memorial of the Church's first elder. It is as follows: "Lemuel Eldridge, one of the two Ruling Elders of this church, died on the 28th of August, 1883, in the seventy-second year of his age. Mr. Eldridge was one of the original members of this church, his

name standing first on its roll. From its inception until the day of his death he identified himself with its interests, he lived with them perpetually on his heart. He was not only officially united with it as one of its earliest ruling elders, but he so connected himself with its history and its work that the church could not be well spoken of except in connection with him. His presence at all its assemblages, whether on the Sabbath or during the week, his prayerfulness, his cheerful aspect, were a continued benediction. The purity, integrity and elevation of his life honored before the world the office which he held in the church. As an Elder he was constant and faithful in his service. His tender and wise words of counsel at the examination of those who were confessing the Saviour will be remembered by those who were received as members of this church during his eldership. Of such a man withdrawn it may well be said as of the departing Elijah—The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof."

After some six months Dr. Aikman accepted the call which had been extended to him and was installed pastor of the church by the Presbytery of West Jersey, on the evening of April 30, 1884. A historical note in the records of the session gives this account of the installation: "The chapel was profusely and beautifully decorated with flowers. A large audience, with an unusually large number of clergymen, was present. The Moderator of The Presbytery, Rev. Joseph R. Milligan, of Gloucester City, presided and put the constitutional questions. The Rev. Villeroy D. Read, D. D., preached the sermon. The Rev. Robert Aikman, D. D., of Madison, N. J., gave the charge to the pastor. The Rev. Lewis P. Baker, of Philadelphia, gave the charge to the people. The Rev. Allen H. Brown, the Synodical Missionary of the Presbytery of West Jersey, made the installing prayer. The pastor gave the benediction."

The history of the next ten years and of the eleven during which the care of this church remained upon the

pastor can be better written by another hand than his whom you urged to be to-day's historian.

On the night of February 28, 1894, Dr. Aikman presented to a meeting of the congregation his resignation as pastor, to take effect on the following April 28th, and the resignation was accepted. On April 17, 1894, the Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relation, to take effect on the date named.

It was Dr. Aikman's privilege, at the close of the eleven years of pastoral and ministerial care, to leave the church with its edifice in perfect repair and appointments, with no encumbering debt, with its organization complete, its Sunday School at nearly its best, its membership, grown from seventy-four to two hundred and seventeen, in entire peace, a united and prosperous church, second to none in the city for efficiency or usefulness—and I need, I think, no apology for adding what my heart and belief demands and what I am sure the older members of this congregation will gladly approve—with its social life harmonious and attractive, made so by the beautiful personality of a pastor's wife rightly held in the love of her husband and his people.

The remaining history of the Church may be briefly told. On the evening of November 22, 1894, a meeting of the congregation, by a large majority vote, elected Rev. Frank J. Mundy pastor of the church. The call, if ever officially made, was never prosecuted before Presbytery. Dr. Mundy, at the request of the session, continued to have "the spiritual care of" the congregation. (Sessional Min. p. 160) until January, 1896, when he gave notice on the evening of the sixth of that month (Min. p. 173) that he declined to be installed pastor of this church. Dr. Mundy's work as stated supply ended April, 1896.

About this time (April, 1896) seventy-three members were, at their own request, dismissed to unite with a new organization which was soon after constituted as The Olivet Presbyterian Church, of Atlantic City, and connected with the West Jersey Presbytery.

On the twentieth of January, 1897, the Rev. Frederick Jonte Stanley, D. D., L. H. D., was unanimously elected pastor of the church, and was installed by the Presbytery of West Jersey on the evening of April 26, 1897.

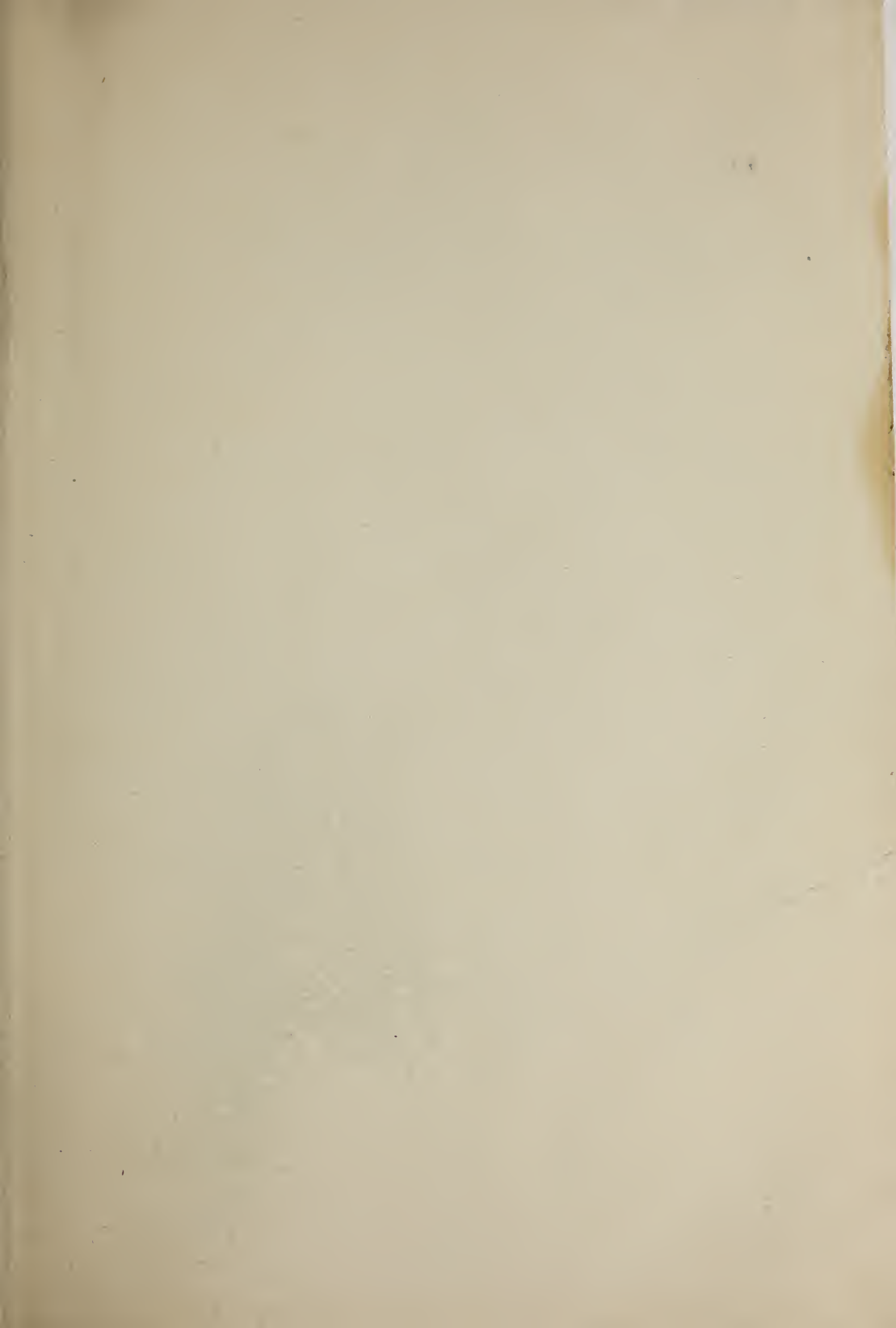
The new pastor and the church, altho its members had so recently been depleted by a large exodus, at once entered upon the work in front of them with enthusiasm and success. The vacancies in membership made by the withdrawal of those who had gone out to form Olivet Church were quickly filled.

Dr. Stanley was an able and interesting preacher and a laborious pastor. The church prospered under his pastorate, which continued seven years—April 26, 1897, to March 1, 1904—when he resigned the charge to accept the secretaryship of the American Sabbath Union.

It has been a providentially favorable thing that, in the two or three intervals between the pastorates, the Rev. Dr. Allen H. Brown has been able to accept the appointment of the Presbytery and be Moderator of the session. In this office he did excellent service, after the resignation of Dr. Stanley, when his infirm health might easily have been a sufficient excuse for declining the service.

After an interval of more than a year, during which the first pastor of the church, Rev. Dr. William Aikman, had charge, by the request of the session, of the mid-week meeting, the Rev. Herbert Mortimer Gesner was given, April 6, 1905, a unanimous call to become pastor of the church. He accepted the call and was installed by The Presbytery of West Jersey on the evening of May 23, 1905.

I end my task—a pleasant one—which was given me to do, with the hope and the prayer that this third pastorate may long continue with the smile of God upon it and with ever-widening usefulness.





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